

**5. Describe existing land use (attach land use maps if available)**

- a. Land use in immediate area.
- b. Land use in area surrounding project area.

**5.1 LAND USE**

**A. Immediate Project Area**

In the south portion of the project corridor, WIS 65 will travel around the south and east sides of the Village of Roberts. Near the WIS 65 interchange with I-94, adjacent land uses include County Materials, Inc., a concrete structure manufacturing and commercial sales facility; a Park and Ride parking lot; and vacant / agricultural land. As the WIS 65 corridor travels northeast, the land continues to be agricultural / vacant as it passes south and east of Roberts. As the WIS 65 corridor continues north along the east side of Roberts, it crosses USH 12 and begins to bend west until it reconnects with the existing WIS 65 near 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Throughout this area, land use is predominantly agricultural. Planned residential subdivisions border the corridor to the west.

The USFWS-owned Kerber Waterfowl Production Area is located at the northeast quadrant of WIS 65 and 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As WIS 65 rejoins the existing corridor and continues north to the City of New Richmond, land use along the corridor is mainly agricultural / vacant, with newly constructed and planned development located at various points. Mainly, the development consists of residential subdivisions, but some commercial properties are located along the corridor and additional commercial development, such as convenience stores, gas stations, and specialty shops, are planned. The development and planned development increases in concentration near CTH G. A construction company's offices and warehouse are located on the east side of WIS 65 at CTH G; self-storage buildings are located at the northeast corner of the same intersection. A utility sub-station is located at the southwest corner of WIS 65 and 130<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

B. Surrounding Area

Land use in the areas surrounding the proposed corridor consists of agricultural, wetland, forest, open water, and rural residential. Urban and transitional land use exists in the following areas:

- City of New Richmond, population 7,244 (2004 population count), located at the project's north terminus.
- Village of Roberts, population 1,275 (2004 population count), located within the proposed corridor's south section.
- Village of Hammond, population 1,153 (2000 population count), located approximately 4 miles east of the proposed corridor's south section.
- City of Hudson, population 8,775 (2000 population count), located approximately 9 miles west of the project corridor's south section.
- City of River Falls, population 2,318 (2000 population count), located approximately 8 miles south of the project's south terminus.

Figure 5.1-1 shows the entire project corridor and highlights the preferred alternative.

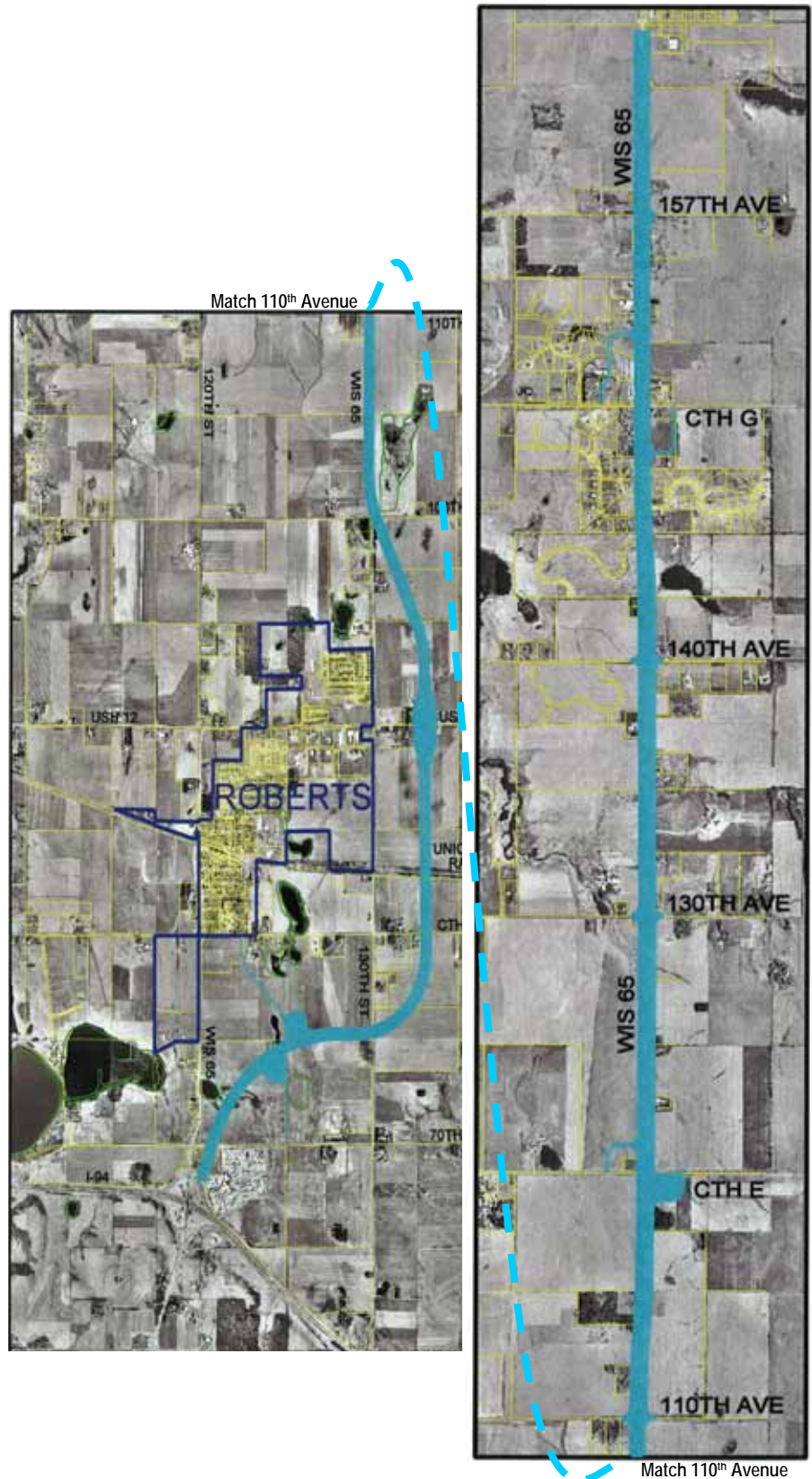


Figure 5.1-1 Existing Land Use Near Proposed WIS 65 Corridor

## **5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS AND RESOURCES**

### **A. Environmental Corridors**

According to the 2002 St. Croix County Development Management Plan, two primary environmental corridors exist in the WIS 65 corridor area. The two corridors include:

- Land surrounding Twin Lakes, located near the south end of the project corridor. This primary environmental corridor extends to the existing WIS 65. The primary environmental corridor may not extend to the preferred Roberts Bypass alignment; this will be determined during a future engineering phase.
- Land along Tenmile Creek and surrounding Lundy Pond, east of WIS 65 between CTH E and CTH G.

A primary environmental corridor relates specifically to the stream or waterbody it contains and the environmental areas, such as shorelands, wetlands, and floodplains, surrounding it.

Additionally, the Roberts – Warren Comprehensive Plan identifies primary, secondary, and independent environmental corridors. The USFWS Kerber Waterfowl Protection Area is identified as a secondary environmental corridor, and a narrow area that crosses WIS 65 north of 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a primary environmental corridor.

WIS 65 is located within a region of Wisconsin identified by WDNR as the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape and the associated Western Prairie Habitat Restoration Area. The restoration program allows WDNR to purchase up to 10-acre plots of land to be used for prairie restoration. WDNR has identified isolation prairie remnants along the railroad tracks both east and west of Roberts; none of these identified prairie remnants will be directly affected by the preferred alternative.

### **B. Groundwater**

According to the St. Croix County Natural Resource Management Plan published in July 2000 (NRMP 2000), two aquifers supply the majority of the potable water to the residents and industries in St. Croix County. The aquifers are the sand and gravel aquifer and the sandstone aquifer. The depth to groundwater in the majority of the project area is greater than 75 feet. In a few places along the northern third of the corridor, the depth to groundwater may range from 26 to 75 feet.

### C. Wetlands and Waterbodies

The southern portion of the WIS 65 corridor (I-94 to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue) passes through approximately 0.5 acres of one wetland and runs north of a second mapped wetland before bending northward and continuing along the east side of Roberts. Tributaries of the Kinnickinnic River are located south and east of the proposed bypass. As the proposed WIS 65 route approaches existing WIS 65, it passes between wetlands located on private property, wetlands located within the Kerber Waterfowl Production Area, and an open waterbody located on private property. The proposed route then follows existing WIS 65, crossing three natural drainage ways that empty into Tenmile Creek and passing immediately east of Tenmile Creek and associated wetlands. North of CTH G, WIS 65 crosses over a drainage way that empties into an unnamed pond. Figure 5.2-1 shows the locations of wetlands and water bodies.

Tenmile Creek is identified as a Class II Trout Water and is part of the Willow River watershed.

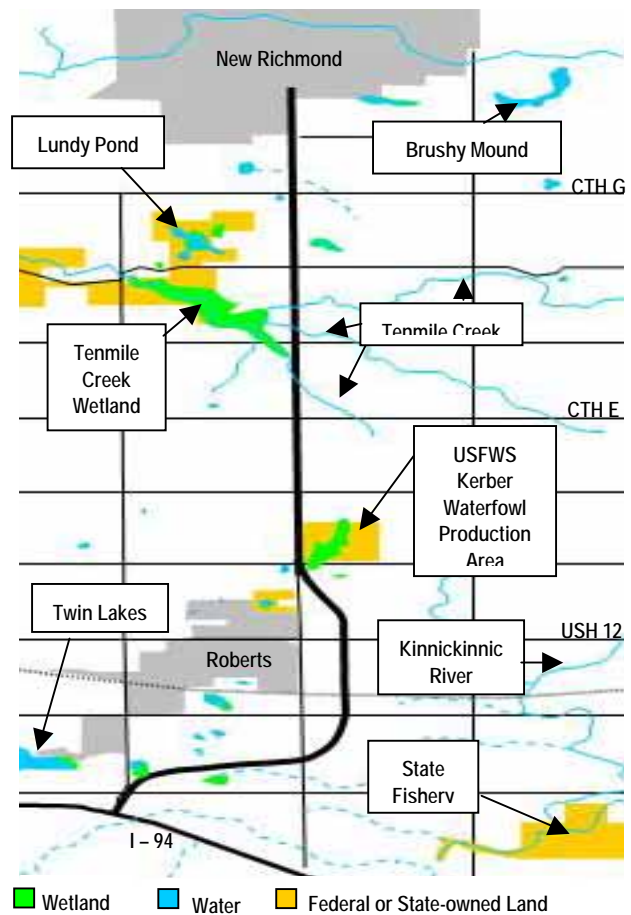
The Kinnickinnic River is also a state fishery, located within approximately one mile from the project corridor. Seasonal tributaries of the Kinnickinnic River extend into the project corridor.

Several lakes, ponds, and unnamed waterbodies are located within and near the project corridor. One unnamed pond and associated wetland, located near the south end of the project corridor, will be impacted by the proposed project. The pond appears to fluctuate seasonally; minimally information regarding water quality or species type in the pond appears to be available.

### E. Threatened and Endangered Species

The WDNR Bureau of Endangered Resources reviewed the WIS 65 corridor as part of the WIS 65 Environmental Study. According to WDNR, their Natural Heritage Inventory data files contain no occurrence of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern species, natural communities, or State Natural Areas known to occur in the project corridor.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) stated in their May 3, 2005 letter that no federally listed threatened or endangered species or critical habitat present along the project corridor.



**Figure 5.2-1 Environmental Corridors, Wetlands, Waterways, and Waterbodies near WIS 65 Corridor**

F. Air Quality

St. Croix County has been designated as a metropolitan county by the federal office of management and budget in Metropolitan Areas, 1993. This designation effects how air quality impacts are evaluated in this environmental assessment. St. Croix County is not in an Ozone Non-Attainment zone.

G. Historic Structures and Archeological Resources

No standing structures within the Area of Potential Effect along the WIS 65 corridor were found to have potential for National Register eligibility. As a result of Phase 1 archaeological investigations of the project corridor, no Phase 2 investigations were recommended.

H. Park and Recreational Land

No parks or recreational lands are located adjacent to the WIS 65 corridor. As mentioned earlier in this report, the USFWS Kerber Waterfowl Production Area is located along the corridor, at the northeast corner of existing WIS 65 and 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

A Park and Ride lot is located at the south end of the project corridor. As a result of the WIS 65 realignment, this parking lot will be converted to highway right-of-way. Replacement of this Park and Ride lot will need to be examined during a future design phase, but one of the Division Street interchange jug-handles has been suggested as a possible replacement location.